

REMARKS

This is in response to the Final Office Action mailed 3/26/03 (Paper No. 7). Claims 1, 4 and 18 have been amended above. Claims 1-18 remain pending in this application.

Claim 1 has been amended to replace the term "connected" with a synonymous term "joined" in order to help expedite prosecution of the instant application, and hence, this is not a narrowing amendment made for patentability reasons. Moreover as the terms are synonymous, it is respectfully submitted that the amendment to claim 1 does not raise any new issues or require further search, and should be entered.

The Examiner has objected to the Drawings. Appended hereto is a proposed drawing amendment for approval by the examiner that overcomes the objections. Further, it is noted that Figs. 2 and 3 show the subject matter in claim 7, and a marked up copy of Fig. 3 has been attached to the response showing the features called for in claim 7.

Claims 4, and 18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. Claims 4 and 18 have been amended to overcome the rejection.

Claims 1-7, 14, 17, and 18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 as being anticipated by Nyseth. The Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Claim 1 calls for a semiconductor cassette reducer with a plurality of wafer supports joining the first substantially U-shaped plate to the second substantially U-shaped plate of the reducer. Nyseth clearly does not anticipate the features called for in claim 1.

Nyseth merely discloses a wafer carrier and not a semiconductor cassette reducer as called for in claim 1. It appears that the Examiner may be improperly ignoring the language calling for a "semiconductor cassette reducer" in claim 1. The aforementioned language is in the preamble of claim 1, however any language in the preamble that serves to further define the structure of the article must be given weight (see MPEP 2111.02). (See also In re Stencel, 4USPO 2d 1071 (Fed. Cir. 1987)). Clearly a semiconductor cassette reducer is structurally very different than a semiconductor cassette, as is disclosed in Nyseth. For example, a semiconductor cassette reducer is a device that is capable of being connected to a semiconductor cassette in some manner. Accordingly, the semiconductor cassette reducer has structure (fasteners, supports, etc.) for connecting the semiconductor cassette reducer to the semiconductor cassette. This is not so with merely a semiconductor cassette. Further, the semiconductor cassette reducer has structure that, when the semiconductor cassette reducer is connected to the semiconductor cassette, effects some kind of reduction of or in the semiconductor cassette as is defined by the language semiconductor cassette reducer. There is no such structure in a mere substrate cassette, as is disclosed in Nyseth. A semiconductor cassette reducer is by definition structurally something more than a semiconductor cassette. The Examiner may not properly ignore the "semiconductor cassette reducer" language in claim 1.

As noted above, claim 1 calls for a semiconductor cassette reducer, and this is not disclosed anywhere in Nyseth. In Figs. 1-5, Nyseth discloses several embodiments of a wafer carrier, thus, by definition, there is absolutely no mention anywhere in Nyseth of anything that is even remotely akin to a semiconductor cassette reducer as claimed.

reducer as called for in claim 1. Moreover, even if for argument purposes, one were to disregard the "substrate cassette reducer" language in claim 1 (though the Applicant maintains that this would be improper) claim 1 still does not read on Nyseth. Claims 1 calls for a plurality of wafer supports joining the first and second substantially U-shaped plates. This is not disclosed in claim 1. In Figs. 1 and 4, Nyseth discloses multi-piece wafer carrier, and in Figs. 2 & 3, Nyseth discloses a one piece wafer carrier. Neither carrier has a plurality of wafer supports connecting first and second U-shaped plates. By way of example, in the one-piece embodiment of Figs. 2 and 3, the carrier has no first and second U-shaped sections, much less a plurality of wafer supports connecting first and second U-shaped plates. In Figs. 1 and 4, the container portion 26 of the Nyseth carrier is made up of two molded portions 50, 52. As seen in Figs. 7-8, portion 50 has wafer shelves 120. Wafer shelves 120 terminate at rear lip 92. When the first portion 50 is mated to the second portion 52, the front splayed lip portion 160 of second portion 52 abuts lip 92 of first portion 50. Hence, the wafer shelves 120 in first portion 50 do not enter or in anyway overlap, or connect or join the first portion 50 to the second portion 52 of the Nyseth carrier. Fig. 9 illustrates the second portion 52 of the canister in Nyseth. As seen in Fig. 9, second portion 52 has no integral wafer shelves whatsoever. In Fig. 12, Nyseth discloses wafer support column 27 with wafer shelves 220. The wafer support columns 27 are mounted to the first portion 50 of the carrier as shown in Fig. 8 (lugs 22B of column 27 enters into recesses 106-112 of portion 50). Though Fig. 1 shows that the shelves 220, and columns 27 are located in the second portion 52) the columns are mounted or connected only to the first portion 50 of the carrier, and do not mount or attach to the second portion 50 of

the Nyseth carrier in any way. Hence, wafer shelves 220 cannot reasonably be considered to join the first and second portions 50, 52. Neither shelves 120, nor shelves 220, nor any other wafer supports in Nyseth connect the first substantially U-shaped plate to the second substantially U-shaped plate as otherwise called for in claim 1. Claims 1-9 are patentable over the cited prior art and should be allowed.

Claim 14 calls for a semiconductor cassette reducer, a first wafer support panel attached to a first arm of the first substantially U-shaped plate and to a first arm of the second substantially U-shaped plate, and a second wafer support attached to a second arm of the first U-shaped plate and to a second arm of the second U-shaped plate. Nyseth does not anticipate the features of claim 14. As noted before, Nyseth discloses a wafer carrier not a semiconductor cassette reducer. Further, as also noted before, both support columns 27 (with shelves 220 thereon) are mounted or attached solely to the top and bottom sections 74, 76 of the first portion 50 (i.e. to top and bottom sections of the same portion not to a first arm of a first portion and a first arm of a second portion). As seen in Fig. 15 (a marked up copy of which is included for the convenience of the Examiner) the outer surface of columns 27 merely contacts but is not attached to the side walls of 158 of second portion 52. Nyseth fails to disclose a semiconductor cassette reducer, and a first wafer support panel attached to a first arm of the first U-shaped plate and to a first arm of the second U-shaped plate, and a second wafer support attached to a second arm of the first U-shaped plate and a second arm of the second U-shaped plate, as otherwise called for in claim 14. In Nyseth, both supports 27 are mounted to the same arms of the same portion 50 (i.e. support 27 is attached to the top/bottom

arms of portion 50 and the other support is attached to the same top/bottom arms and not to different arms, than the ones to which the first support is attached, of different portions). Claims 14-18 are patentable over the cited prior art and should be allowed.

Claim 10 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 as being anticipated by Schreiber. The Applicant respectfully disagrees. Claim 10 calls for a semiconductor cassette reducer with a plurality of wafer supports. Clearly, Schreiber does not anticipate the features recited in claim 10. As noted before, the "semiconductor cassette reducer" language in claim 10 may not be properly ignored. A semiconductor cassette reducer is structurally different than semiconductor cassettes, or reducers of any type of any other apparatus that are not semiconductor cassette reducers (e.g. semiconductor cassette reducers have structure that effects mounting connection or some kind of interface with a semiconductor cassette). A pottery support, such as is disclosed in Schreiber, is clearly structurally very different than a semiconductor cassette reducer. Merely having stackable shelves does not turn a pottery support into a semiconductor cassette reducer as called for in claim 1. Schreiber discloses a pottery support, not a semiconductor cassette reducer. Nor does Schreiber disclose wafer supports. Rather Schreiber discloses only pottery supports. There is no mention anywhere in Schreiber of wafer supports of any kind. Nor do the pottery supports in Schreiber appear suitable as wafer supports. For example, the down inclined flange 4 and the support pins 7 behind the edge of the flange (see Fig. 3) present an irregular form when inserting wafers. This irregular form, if the pottery support, was used as a wafer support may catch a wafer during transport, either damaging the wafer or

knocking it off the transporter. The pottery support in Schreiber is simply not wafer supports as called for in claim 10.

For all of the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims now present in the application are clearly novel and patentable over the prior art of record, and are in proper form for allowance. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested. Should any unresolved issues remain, the Examiner is invited to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge payment for any fees associated with this communication or credit any over payment to Deposit Account No. 16-1350.

Respectfully submitted,



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5/23/03

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CERTIFICATE OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that this Amendment After Final, Submission of Proposed Drawing Amendment, Change of Attorney or Agent's Address In Application and Associate Power of Attorney or Agent are being transmitted by facsimile to 703-872-9327 the date indicated below, addressed to the Box AF, Commissioner of Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

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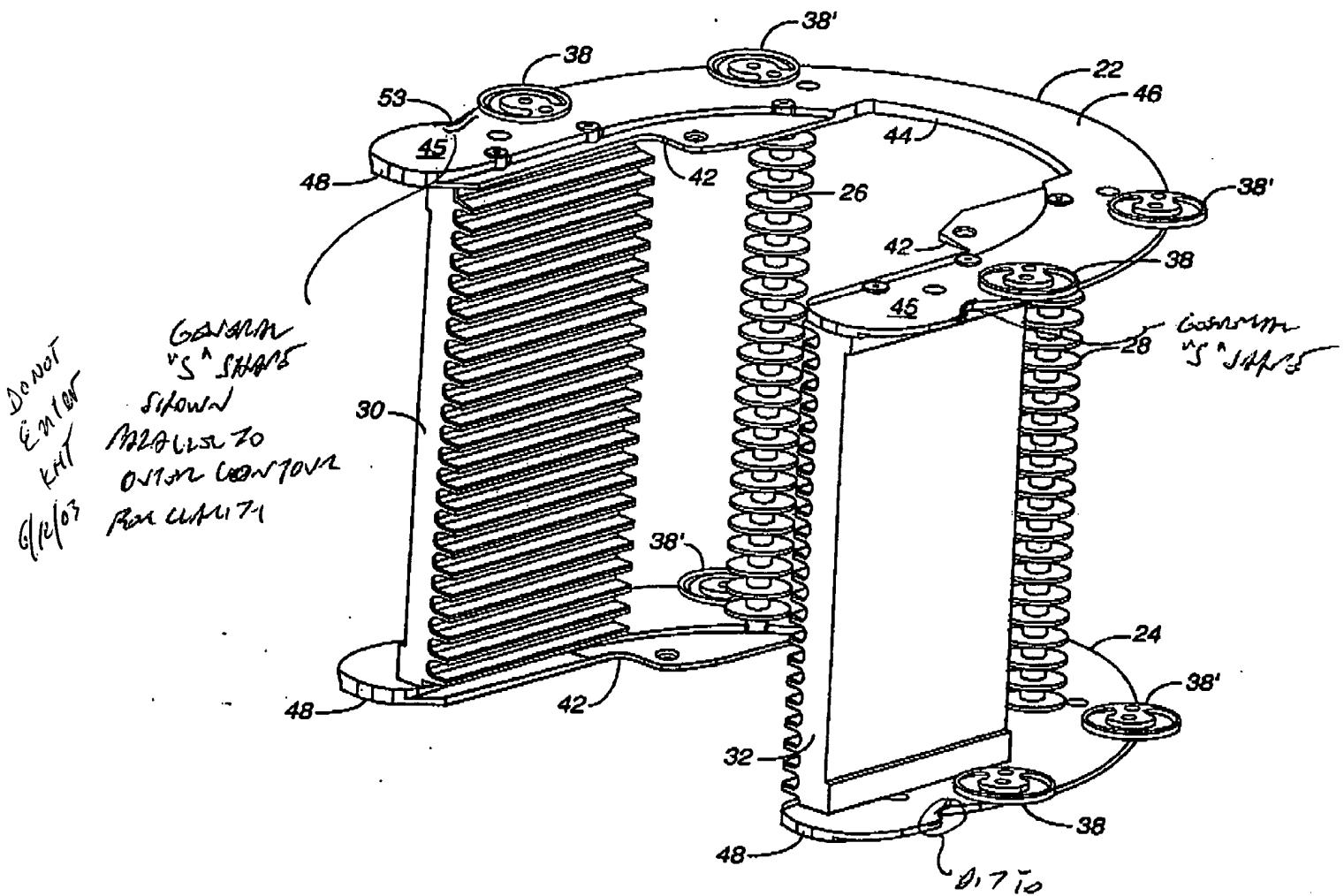
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FIG. 3

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FIG. 15

